United Nations

A/51/PV.107

General Assembly

Fifty-first Session

Official Records

107th plenary meeting
Monday, 15 September 1997, 11 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, late Prime Minister of Afghanistan

Tribute to the memory of Mr. Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu, late Minister Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: This morning, before we take up the items on our agenda, it is my sad duty to pay tribute, first, to the memory of the late Prime Minister of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, who perished in a plane crash on 21 August 1997.

Mr. Ghafoorzai will be remembered for his distinguished service to his country, with a constructive career in a number of high-level ministerial posts. He will also be remembered for his dedication to the cause of the United Nations. On behalf of the General Assembly, I request the representative of Afghanistan to convey our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Afghanistan and to the bereaved family of Mr. Ghafoorzai.

The Assembly will also pay tribute to the memory of the late Minister Plenipotentiary and Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations, Mr. Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu, who passed away on 8 August 1997.

Many of us had the privilege of knowing and working closely with Mr. Lukabu as his country's chief delegate at the United Nations for a number of years. His diplomacy and his dedication to the ideals and principles of the United Nations were well respected by all. On behalf of the General Assembly, I should like to convey our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the bereaved family.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memories of the late Prime Minister of Afghanistan and the late Minister Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who will speak on behalf of the Asian States.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Asian Group, which I have the honour of chairing this month, learned with great regret of the passing away of Mr. Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu, the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. On behalf of the Asian Group, I wish to extend deepest and most sincere condolences to the bereaved family of the deceased, as well as to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to his Mission, where he worked as Chargé d'affaires from 1992 until 1997, the year of his passing.

97-85972 (E)

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Mr. Lukabu passed away in the fifth decade of life. He had sacrificed and given much during his life in diplomacy. He graduated in international law in 1970 and helped enhance the legislation of his country. He worked in the International Law Commission of the United Nations and in the Commission on the Law of the Sea. He gave much to promote the activities of the United Nations in the legal field. He joined the Foreign Ministry of his country in 1970 and gradually accumulated much expertise in the field. He was Head of his country's Mission at Geneva in 1976 and 1977, as well as of the Mission at New York from 1992 until this year.

Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu has left us forever. However, he left his imprint on international diplomacy. This is clearly seen in his activities in international law. He had followed the activities of the law of the sea since the conference on the law of the sea. He headed his country's missions to many conferences and international forums, to the summits of the Organization of African Unity and to its ministerial conferences.

On behalf of the Asian Group, we say: "May he rest in peace, may his memory be blessed." Our condolences go to his family, Mission and Government.

The President: I now call on the representative of Armenia, who will speak on behalf of the Eastern European States.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States in my capacity as Chairman of the Group for the month of September. I would like to pay tribute to the memory of the late Prime Minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, who died in a plane crash on 21 August 1997.

Prime Minister Ghafoorzai had a long and distinguished career in the foreign service of Afghanistan, which also included a number of years of service at the Afghan Mission to the United Nations. The member States of the Eastern European Group would like to express their heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of Afghanistan and to the bereaved family of the deceased.

The member States of the Eastern European Group also express their deep sorrow and regret at the untimely death of Mr. Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu, Chargé d'affaires of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations. Mr. Lukabu, who passed away on 8 August 1997, had a long and outstanding diplomatic career, during the last five years of which he served as his country's representative to the United Nations. We would like to extend our sincere sympathies to his family and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President: I now call on the representative of Uruguay, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, it is my painful duty to express our regret at the deaths of two colleagues who were active here at the United Nations as representatives of their respective Missions — the Mission of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire — Mr. Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai and Mr. Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu, respectively. They were two colleagues who, be it wisely or in error, acted in accordance with their ideals in carrying out the instructions of their capitals. In the case of Afghanistan, destiny has cut short in an air crash the life of a vigorous diplomat and politician, a great deal of whose career took pace in this Organization. He worked alongside colleagues and friends here for many years, serving as Alternate Permanent Representative and as Vice-President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

In the political field his activities were extensive and he held high offices. Without doubt he was firmly committed to his ideals, and his work undoubtedly influenced the fortunes of his country.

Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu was essentially a diplomat, deploying his legal talents both within and outside of the Organization, particularly in the field of the Law of the Sea. From 1989 he served as Alternate Permanent Representative to the Organization, and between 1992 and 1997 he served as Chargé d'affaires *ad interim*.

Today, faced with the loss of two colleagues with whom many of us had an opportunity to converse and debate in our daily work, we would like, on behalf of the Latin America and the Caribbean Group of States, to express to their Governments, people and friends our deep regret on their passing.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein, speaking on behalf of the Western European and Other States.

Mrs. Fritsche (Liechtenstein): In my capacity as the chairperson of the Group of Western European and Other States, I wish on behalf of the group to pay tribute to the memory of the late Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, Prime Minister of Afghanistan. Prime Minister Ghafoorzai was a career diplomat who served as member of the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York from 1973 to 1978 and again from 1992 to 1995. In 1993 he was promoted to the rank of Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations. In 1995, Mr. Ghafoorzai was appointed Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. He was acting Minister for Foreign Affairs from February 1997 to 11 August of this year, when he was appointed Prime Minister of Afghanistan.

During his career, Mr. Ghafoorzai served as chairman of various international gatherings and conferences. He was Vice-President of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. On behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, I would like to express sincere condolences to the Government and people of Afghanistan, as well as to the bereaved family of Prime Minister Ghafoorzai.

I would furthermore like to pay tribute to the memory of Khabouji Lukabu, Chargé d'affaires of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who sadly passed away on 8 August of this year. Mr. Lukabu served as a member of the foreign service of his country since 1970. He headed various departments within the foreign office, and he served at the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Geneva as well as in New York. In New York he served as First Counsellor at the Mission from 1987 to 1989, when he was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative.

Mr. Lukabu served as Chargé d'affaires from 1992 to 1997. He was particularly interested in and developed an expertise in the Law of the Sea and headed the Congolese delegations to various international conferences. Mr. Lukabu was involved in negotiations *inter alia* relating to air transport, technical cooperation and legal assistance. Besides participating in the work of the General Assembly, he also was involved in meetings of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers and the OAU Conference of Heads of State and Government.

Let me on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States convey deep condolences to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as to the bereaved family and the staff of the Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau, speaking on behalf of the African States.

Mr. Cabral (*interpretation from French*): The African Group is very grateful to you for having organized this tribute that we are paying to the memories of two illustrious deceased persons.

The Prime Minister of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai, was known to all of us. He was a talented diplomat, someone who, along with us here, applied himself to defending the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which are so dear to all the nations we represent. He was someone who applied himself to defending the interests of his country in the Security Council at a time when, as we know, the Afghani people faced such deplorable troubles. Therefore, it is with great sorrow that we learned of the news of his passing.

I would like, on behalf of the African Group, to bow to the memory of this distinguished person and to present our deep condolences to the delegation of Afghanistan and to ask them to be kind enough to pass along our feelings of compassion to the sorely tried family of the deceased.

The African Group is very much aware of the feelings just expressed by the chairs of the other regional groups. We have lost more than a friend, a brother, in Mr. Lukabu. He was a warm person, someone who accustomed us to sharing our frustrations and who encouraged us to continue on what he saw as the best way. To him, this meant becoming deeply involved in all that concerned us and that led us, here in these chambers of the United Nations, to work for the well-being of our countries.

Lukabu was a great Congolese patriot who, despite the well-known difficulties, fought courageously and with determination to make the voice of his people heard and to convey to each and every one of us the fact that it was necessary for us not only to take interest in the fate of his people, but also to do all we could to help them to return to the path of dignity and development. It was, therefore, with sorrow that the news of his death reached us.

We wish here and now to pay a tribute to this African, a determined militant of the African Group who contributed a great deal to that Group and to other Members of the United Nations.

I should like to ask everyone to say a kind word in their prayers on behalf this African friend who has left us. We had hoped, as did he, that he would live long enough to participate in the rebirth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but fate intended otherwise. Today, on behalf of my colleagues, I bow to his memory and offer our deepest condolences to his bereaved family. I would request all those who knew him not to forget that his family and children remain and require our compassion and assistance.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak as the host country.

Mr. Marrero (United States of America): Prime Minister Ghafoorzai was for many years a well-known and well-liked colleague for those of us in the United Nations community. He was an agile diplomat with a sharp mind, and his recent tragic death in a plane crash while in pursuit of peace brings to mind the work of the second Secretary-General of this institution, Dag Hammarskjöld, who died in a similar manner.

Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai devoted his life to the betterment of the people of Afghanistan. He worked hard for his cause. But we also knew that he was always quick with a smile and a laugh. He was a devoted family man. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and his many friends.

The conflict in Afghanistan has been one of the more tenacious and destructive conflicts facing the United Nations. Prime Minister Ghafoorzai gave his life for the cause of peace in Afghanistan. In his memory, we should redouble our efforts to find a peaceful resolution to that conflict and bring peace at last to the troubled land. On behalf of our delegation, we express our condolences to his family and his Government on his untimely death.

I also want to express, on behalf of the United States, our sadness at the passing of Mr. Lukabu, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mr. Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu served his country with great dedication during an especially difficult period in its history. Since he came to New York in 1987, Mr. Lukabu demonstrated that he represented not only his Government but his nation. We recognized his commitment during the past year to helping us better understand the profound transition his country was undergoing. Again, we express our condolences to his family, his people and his Government.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Farhadi (Afghanistan): I am grateful to you, Sir, and to all those present at this meeting of the General Assembly, which is dedicated to the memory of the Afghan statesman and diplomat, Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai. The Permanent Mission of the Islamic State of Afghanistan highly appreciates the kind words of sympathy that have been pronounced here.

The late Mr. Ghafoorzai embarked upon his diplomatic career as a young Second Secretary of the Afghanistan Mission under the able guidance of the late Ambassador Abdul Rahman Pazhwak, the Afghan diplomat who once presided over a General Assembly session at the United Nations.

In 1980, when Afghanistan was occupied by the Red Army, the late Mr. Ghafoorzai declared his defection from the installed puppet regime in Kabul during a United Nations meeting and subsequently started a political campaign aimed at supporting the liberation of Afghanistan. He began by establishing contacts with the leaders of the Afghan Jihad and defended the cause of Afghanistan before the Stockholm tribunal in 1981. While living in New York, he deployed efforts to inform permanent missions to the United Nations on the Afghan liberation movement.

In April 1992, following the fall of the Communist regime in Kabul, he was given the assignment of Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic State of Afghanistan to the United Nations. In 1995, he became Deputy Foreign Minister in Kabul. He continued, however, to participate in Security Council and General Assembly meetings. Given the critical situation of Afghanistan, his statements, as recorded in the verbatim records of the meetings, certainly have great historical value. He addressed this Assembly on 7 October 1996 — under your presidency, Sir — in the general debate and on 13 December 1996, when the resolution on the situation in Afghanistan was adopted. And on 14 April 1997, he made two important statements in the Security Council when the question of Afghanistan was discussed.

He led the Afghan delegation in the XXII Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Countries in New Delhi and the seventh Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization in Tehran. The following week, on 29 April 1997, his appointment as Foreign Minister was announced.

He played a major role from these events up to his tragic death on 21 August 1997 — just 10 days after being appointed Prime Minister — in inviting different Afghan parties to work together against foreign intervention and on calling the Taliban to accept a negotiated settlement and to join the peace process, in accordance with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on Afghanistan. In this transitional stage, lasting only six months, the late Mr. Ghafoorzai intended and was steadfast in his determination to convene the grand national decision-making assembly and the formation of a broad-based inclusive government based on a democratic constitution.

The late Mr. Ghafoorzai will be remembered as a figure of unity and fraternity among all Afghans. We pray Almighty God to bestow His clemency and grace upon him.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Kapanga (Democratic Republic of the Congo): (*interpretation from French*): I should like to add my voice to those of other representatives who have spoken before me in extending our sincere condolences to the delegation of Afghanistan following the tragic death of its Prime Minister, Mr. Abdul Rahim Ghafoorzai.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and on behalf of the entire family of our late colleague, we offer our sincere thanks for the all condolences expressed on the sudden death of our deputy Permanent Representative and Chargé d'affaires *ad interim*, Mr. Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu. We are also grateful to his friends, those we know and those we do not, among the staff of the United Nations and the international community in New York, in particular those of the African Group, for their presence and the support shown throughout this difficult and trying time. We are especially moved by the fine tribute paid by his counterparts and colleagues, who were privileged to know him and to work in close collaboration with him in the five years during which he directed the work of our country's Permanent Mission in New York.

Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu demonstrated great dedication in carrying out his functions. He showed himself to be an honourable, conscientious and meticulous worker. Whether during the work of the various United Nations bodies or during the numerous international meetings and conferences in which he participated as a representative of our Republic, he showed outstanding qualities as a negotiator, for which we held him in high regard. We pay tribute to his personal merits and his great qualities as a diplomat. We remember him as an able professional, considered one of the best by our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was truly a tireless and unremitting servant of the State, keenly aware of the dignity and nobility of the functions entrusted to him by the Government. In his persistence and perseverance, Khabouji N'zaji Lukabu, a man of experience and a highly skilled diplomat, succeeded in maintaining the public image of our country.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo thinks today of his wife and children, and shares in their suffering. May all his family and many friends be sure that we will never forget him.

The President: At this point I must also note with great sadness the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales, who won huge admiration all over the world for her efforts, and the passing away of Mother Teresa, who devoted her entire life to serving the poor and the marginalized, giving them comfort.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/51/780/Add.8)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/51/780/Add.8, the Secretary-General informs me that, since the issuance of his communications contained in documents A/51/780 and addenda 1 to 7, dated 21 and 30 January, 4, 12 and 21 March, 18 April, 20 May and 13 June 1997, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau and Seychelles have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda of the fifty-first regular session of the General Assembly and organization of work

Request for the reopening of the consideration of agenda item 166 (Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991)

Note by the Secretary General (A/51/968)

The President: In his note contained in document A/51/968, the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that, in order to enable the General Assembly to consider his recommendation contained in his identical letters dated 30 July 1997 addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (A/51/958-S/1997/605), it will be necessary to reopen consideration of agenda item 166.

May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to reopen consideration of agenda item 166, entitled "Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of the request of the Secretary-General contained in document A/51/968?

I see no objection. We will proceed accordingly.

Agenda item 166 (*continued*)

Election of judges of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/51/958)

Letter from the President of the Security Council (A/51/976)

The President: I wish to refer to the letter from the Secretary-General dated 30 July 1997, contained in document A/51/958, to which is annexed a letter from the President of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, dated 18 June 1997. In his letter, the President of the International Tribunal requests that the terms of office of Judges Karibi-Whyte, Odio Benito and Jan be extended until the completion of the *Celebici* case. In his letter the President of the International Tribunal indicates that the period required to complete the *Celebici* case is estimated at one year.

In a letter dated 27 August 1997 addressed to me and contained in document A/51/976, the President of the Security Council transmits the text of Security Council resolution 1126 (1997) of 27 August 1997, whereby the Council

> "Endorses the recommendation of the Secretary-General that Judges Karibi-Whyte, Odio Benito and Jan, once replaced as members of the Tribunal, finish the *Celebici* case which they have begun before expiry of their terms of office; and takes note of the intention of the International Tribunal to finish the case before November 1998."

In connection with the programme budget implications of the recommendation of the Secretary-General, I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Jin (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I should like to inform members that, should the General Assembly decide to extend the terms of office of Judges Karibi-Whyte, Odio Benito and Jan for a 12-month period, as endorsed by Security Council resolution 1126 (1997), additional costs, provisionally estimated at $668,000, would arise.

It is anticipated that of that amount, the costs relating to the year 1997, which would be $152,000, could be met from within the 1997 appropriation adopted for the Tribunal by resolution 51/214 B. With respect to the additional costs for the year 1998 of $516,000, this requirement would be reported to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session in the context of the 1998 proposed budget for the Tribunal.

The President: If there is no objection, I propose that the Assembly decide to endorse the recommendation

of the Secretary-General, which was endorsed by the Security Council.

I see no objection.

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 166?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Report of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations (A/51/43)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/51/973)

Draft decision (A/51/43, para. 18)

Draft resolution (A/51/L.78)

The President: The Assembly will first consider the report of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, which was circulated in document A/51/43. The Assembly has before it a draft decision contained in paragraph 18 of document A/51/43.

In this connection, the report of the Fifth Committee was circulated as document A/51/973.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: I now call on the representative of Luxembourg, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Cyprus have aligned themselves with this statement. Liechtenstein and Norway likewise associate themselves with it.

It is now almost three years since the General Assembly, aware of the importance and urgency of securing a viable financial basis for the United Nations, established the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations. The Group was to consider new measures to overcome the serious financial difficulties facing the United Nations and to guarantee it certain and predictable funding.

Today, after a number of meetings, we have adopted a draft decision which in fact suspends the proceedings of the High-level Working Group without its having succeeded in agreeing on any measure that would solve the financial crisis which confronts the United Nations.

The European Union can only regret our inability to agree on a matter so vitally important for the future of the Organization. It would nevertheless like to express its appreciation to those delegations and groups of countries which, like the European Union, have put forward concrete ideas and proposals during our discussions.

The main cause for the grave financial situation facing the United Nations is that certain Member States, due to a lack of political will, do not meet their financial obligations under the Charter, which is an instrument binding on each Member State of the United Nations under international law.

The Member States which belong to the European Union, whose contributions account for 35.4 per cent of the regular budget and 37.9 per cent of the peacekeeping budget, have always honoured their financial obligations promptly, in full and without conditions. We wish to repeat in this forum that we expect our partners in the Organization to do the same.

Concrete measures should be taken without fail to ensure a certain and predictable financial basis for the Organization. To this end, the European Union has submitted a set of coherent proposals, the main elements of which I should briefly like to recall. They relate to measures to accelerate the payment of arrears, to make the system for paying contributions more rigorous, to reform the scale of assessments so as to reflect better the principle of capacity to pay, and to strengthen the controls over United Nations spending.

It is important that the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, which opens tomorrow, succeed where the High-level Working Group failed, and that it endeavour to find a solution to these questions which are fundamental in ensuring the Organization's future capacity to fulfil its mandate fully. The European Union, for its part, is determined to participate fully in this exercise in a spirit of cooperation with all the Member States.

Finally, the European Union wishes to express its appreciation and its gratitude for the way in which you, Sir, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Mrs. Annette des Iles of Trinidad and Tobago and Mr. Ernst Sucharipa of Austria, have conducted the work of the Working Group.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision contained in paragraph 18 of the report of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Draft resolution (A/51/L.78)

The President: The Assembly will now turn to the consideration of draft resolution A/51/L.78, entitled "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace".

I call on the representative of Cape Verde to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.78.

Mr. Monteiro (Cape Verde) (*interpretation from French*): I am honoured to introduce draft resolution A/51/L.78 following the consensus reached in the General Assembly's Informal Open-ended Working Group on an Agenda for Peace, over which you, Sir, have charged me to preside. It is entitled, "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace".

The draft resolution has two goals that are expressed very concisely in the text. This entails, first of all, that the General Assembly adopt two documents that have thus far been provisional, one relating to coordination and the other to the question of sanctions imposed by the United Nations. The two are annexed to the draft resolution and are an integral part of it.

The Working Group also decided to recommend that the General Assembly request the President to hold consultations on the possibility of continuing, on the basis of the work already done, the activities of the Group in two other areas that have been identified as ones in which agreement was not reached, that is to say, post-conflict peace-building and preventive diplomacy and peace-making. In doing so the logic followed by the Working Group was that the whole of the membership could immediately take advantage of the achievements already made in the consideration of the question of peace by our Organization, without losing sight of the overall mandate entrusted to it.

In this connection please note that the annex on the question of sanctions imposed by the United Nations includes a number of guidelines that would significantly enhance the Organization's use of that delicate instrument in response to threats to international peace and security.

Also, once fully implemented, the contents of the annex on coordination should significantly enhance the collective efficiency of the United Nations system and the Member States in their concerted efforts to achieve peace.

I would also like to pay tribute here on behalf of the Group to Ambassadors Celso Amorim of Brazil and Biørn Lian of Norway. They showed great diplomatic skill and determination and had great success in coordinating the lengthy and rather extensive discussions held in the sub-groups on sanctions and coordination. I would also like to congratulate the delegations in our Working Group for the spirit of cooperation that guided the search for the consensus reached.

It is therefore my honour to recommend this draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/51/L.78.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/51/L.78?

Draft resolution A/51/L.78 was adopted (resolution 51/242).

The President: I should like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to Ambassador Ernst Sucharipa of Austria and Ambassador Annette des Iles, former Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, both of whom, as Vice-Chairpersons of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, made invaluable and constructive contributions to the work of the Working Group.

I should also like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador José Luis Barbosa Leao Monteiro of Cape Verde and Ambassador Alex Reyn of Belgium for their able leadership as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace.

My appreciation is equally extended to the Coordinators of the sub-groups of the Working Group: Ambassador Richard Butler, former Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil and Ambassador Hans Jacob Biørn Lian of Norway. Their collective effort has brought progress towards an Agenda for Peace.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 10?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 47 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/51/47 and Corr.1)

Draft decision (A/51/47, para. 10)

The President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 47, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

The report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council was circulated in document A/51/47 and Corrigendum 1.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a draft decision contained in paragraph 10 of document A/51/47.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision contained in paragraph 10 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: I should like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein, Permanent Representative of Finland, and Ambassador Asda Jayanama, Permanent Representative of Thailand, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, who have continued during the fifty-first session the daunting task of conducting the discussions and complex negotiations of the Working Group. I am sure members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our appreciation and admiration.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 47?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 43

The situation in Burundi

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 43.

Agenda item 46

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 46.

Agenda item 58

Question of Cyprus

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session but deferred a decision on the allocation of the item to an appropriate time during the session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 58.

Agenda item 167 *(continued)*

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session, and that at its 100th plenary meeting, on 22 May 1997, the Assembly adopted resolution 51/230.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude consideration of this item?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 115

Improving the financial situation of the United Nations

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 115.

Agenda item 127

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude consideration of this item?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 128

Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 128.

Agenda item 130

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 130.

Agenda item 131

Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique

The President: Members may recall that on 20 September 1996 the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the present session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

May I take it, then, that it is the wish of the Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of the fifty-second session?

It was so decided.

The President: This concludes our consideration of agenda item 131.

Agenda item 165 (*continued*)

Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala

The President: Members may recall that, on 20 September 1996, the Assembly decided to include agenda item 165 in the agenda of the present session and that, at its 95th plenary meeting on 3 April 1997, the Assembly adopted resolution 51/228.

Members are aware that an item entitled "Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala" has been included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-second session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude consideration of agenda item 165?

It was so decided.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President: The General Assembly will now consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 112, 116, 118, 119, 140 (a) and 141.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee, Mr. Ihor Hummeny of Ukraine, to introduce the reports of the Fifth Committee in one intervention.

Mr. Hummeny (Ukraine), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee: I have the honour to present today to the General Assembly the reports of the Fifth Committee on the agenda items dealt with during the third part of its resumed fifty-first session, held at Headquarters from 8 to 12 September 1997.

In connection with agenda item 10, entitled 'Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the

Organization", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/973, and in paragraph 3 the Committee takes note of the report and decides to transmit it to the General Assembly for action.

In connection with the report under agenda item 112, entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", contained in document A/51/922/Add.2, in which the Fifth Committee recommends, in paragraph 13 of its report, a draft resolution entitled "Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities", I wish to draw the attention of the Assembly to the following editorial corrections that need to be incorporated in the text:

In the third line of operative paragraph 9, the words "the regular part of" should be inserted between the words "General Assembly at" and "its fifty-second session";

In the first line of operative paragraph 10, the words "the regular part of" should be inserted after the word "at";

In the fifth line of operative paragraph 11, the words "the regular part of" should be inserted between the words "General Assembly at" and "its fifty-second session";

In the second line of sub-item (b) of this paragraph, the words "applicable to" should replace the word "as";

In the fifth line of operative paragraph 13, the words "the regular part of" should be inserted between the words "General Assembly at" and "its fifty-second session";

Operative paragraph 14 should read: "Decides to consider the question at the regular part of its fifty-second session".

This draft resolution was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning the question of strengthening of the external oversight mechanisms, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it resume its consideration at the earliest possible stage of its fifty-second session.

Concerning agenda item 116, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/750/Add.3. In this report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/51/L.86, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Regarding agenda item 118, entitled "Pattern of conferences", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/742/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft resolution A/C.5/51/L.87, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

In connection with agenda item 119, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/747/Add.2, and in paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/51/L.85, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Concerning agenda item 140 (a), entitled "Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/753/Add.3. In paragraph 8 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/51/L.89, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Finally, with regard to agenda item 141, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services", the report of the Fifth Committee is contained in document A/51/741/Add.1. In paragraph 6 of that report, the Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of draft decision A/C.5/51/L.88, which was adopted by the Committee without a vote.

This is the last report of the Fifth Committee to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. On behalf of the Bureau of this Committee, I am pleased to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to you, Sir, for the excellent manner in which you guided the proceedings of the General Assembly during this session. I would also like to express our sincere thanks to our very able Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Joseph Acakpo-Satchivi, and his dedicated assistant, Mrs. Nora Benary, for the smooth functioning of the work of the Committee. I would also like to thank the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, Ambassador Mselle; the Controller, Mr. Jean-Pierre Halbwachs; and all other staff for the full support they have given the Committee in order to facilitate its work.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that:

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless notified otherwise.

Agenda item 112 (*continued*)

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Parts II and III) (A/51/922/Add.1 and 2)

The President: The Assembly will first turn to Part II of the report of the Fifth Committee, contained in document A/51/922/Add.1.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Management in the United Nations".

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We next turn to part III of the report of the Fifth Committee, contained in document A/51/922/Add.2).

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 13 of part III of its report and on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 14 of the same document.

The draft resolution, entitled "Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities", was adopted by the Fifth Committee without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft resolution, as orally revised?

The draft resolution, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 51/243).

The President: The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Strengthening of the external oversight mechanisms", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their positions.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): Now that we have resumed after our summer vacations, I hope that you, Mr. President, had a good vacation, and I wish you a successful conclusion of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

I have a few observations to make on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in relation to the reports that have just been concluded.

The cardinal principle for the implementation of mandated activities by the United Nations is the provision

of adequate resources to the Secretary-General collectively by Members of the Organization. When we approve a mandate, we assume the obligation that the Member States will provide resources for the efficient and effective functioning of the Organization, in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations. Unless this principle is fully respected, the Secretary-General will find himself in a difficult situation, and exceptional practices, like the acceptance of gratis personnel, are bound to affect the Organization negatively.

Today the General Assembly has adopted by consensus an important resolution, which we hope will go a long way in restoring the international character and impartiality of the Organization. The General Assembly has now provided a clear direction in which this issue should be dealt with in its totality. This important decision explicitly stipulates that gratis personnel may be accepted only in cases of urgency, and for expertise not available within the Organization, for a very limited and specified time. Those gratis personnel who are outside these parameters have to be phased out expeditiously.

The Group of 77 and China took an active part in the difficult and arduous negotiations with a view to ensuring full respect to the principles of the United Nations Charter. We are confident that this consensus decision will be fully implemented in letter and spirit by the Secretary-General.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mrs. Buergo (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all, my delegation wishes to thank the coordinator of this important issue, our colleague from Mexico, Marta Peña, for the results obtained in the negotiations on this issue, which urgently requires the preparation of specific policy guidelines for the use of gratis personnel in the Organization.

My delegation fully endorses the statement made by the representative of the Group of 77 and China, and would like to add the following comments. In joining the consensus on this resolution, my delegation understands that once the process of gradually phasing out gratis personnel has begun, the Secretariat should submit to the General Assembly, during its fifty-second regular session, all the information required on total resource requirements so that we can decide on the inclusion in the 1998-1999 budget, as well as in the budgets for the support account and tribunals, of posts for the fulfilment of functions currently performed by outgoing personnel, should this work still be required by the Organization.

My delegation also attaches great importance to the provisions of paragraph 11 of this resolution, and in this connection we trust that the staff used in the categories covered by paragraphs 4 (a) and 4 (b) will not be carrying out functions that could be carried out by Secretariat staff.

Lastly, my delegation trusts that the changes made to the original English text will be duly made in the other languages.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 112?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part IV) (A/51/750/Add.3)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of part IV of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision, entitled "Construction of additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa", without a vote.

May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 116?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/51/742/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part II of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/211 F).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 118?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part III) (A/51/747/Add.2)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of part III of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote.

May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 119?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 140 (*continued*)

Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part IV) (A/51/753/Add.3)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 8 of part IV of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Support account for peacekeeping operations", without a vote.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 51/239 B).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 140?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 140 as a whole.

Agenda item 141 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Report of the Fifth Committee (Part II) (A/51/741/Add.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report (A/51/741/Add.1). The Fifth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 141?

It was so decided.

Agenda items that remain for consideration during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly

The President: I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items, on which action has been taken at previous meetings, have remained open for consideration during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly: items 12, 17, 21, 33, 35, 37, 39, 40, 56, 97, 110, 111, 114, 120 to 126, 129, 132 to 139, 153 to 155, 157 and 168.

As members are aware, these items have been included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, with the exception of item 122, entitled "United Nations pension system", which will be included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-third session.

May I take it that the Assembly considers that discussion of these items at the present session is concluded?

It was so decided.

Closing address by the President

The President: It is customary for the President to conclude by mapping out the contours of the session and by summarizing the various achievements of the General Assembly. Without seeming to dramatize the fifty-first session, I would like to offer my impressions of the year.

To me, the fifty-first session of the General Assembly has been a time of knuckling down to work and more work, minimizing the ceremonials and concentrating creative energies to overcome political wills in discord, in an effort to advance the purposes and principles of the Charter and to reform the Organization. I would like to believe that perhaps a spirit of partnership is being forged across both sides of the house in a collective effort to enhance greater transparency and to modernize the United Nations for the challenges ahead.

Having got through the regular session with what I would like to believe is a new work culture and discarding the syndrome of "business as usual", which has resulted in a year's notional savings of $2 million, the General Assembly has laboured over various aspects of reform and restructuring through the five Working Groups. There was also the presentation of the Secretary-General's two-track blueprint to "quietly revolutionize" the Organization. Reform fever aside, the year was notable also for the appointment of a new Secretary-General, the special session for the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the tenth emergency special session, on the occupied territories.

It is a matter of some satisfaction that we managed to complete the Agenda for Development and the work of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, but we must note how much was unfinished and unfulfilled in order to achieve consensus. While the political significance of the Agenda for Development is embedded in the completion of the document itself, the fact that it does not represent collateral or guarantee greater financial resources for the United Nations role in operationalizing development remains a disappointment for developing countries.

International cooperation exercised nationally, globally and in partnership with other stakeholders came to a serious impasse at the special session. Governments could not even agree on a political declaration that would honestly assess our record on implementing the commitments undertaken at the Rio Summit. The bare-boned outcome of the session neither set new targets nor catalysed resources for programmes, even when the subject of sustainable development holds enormous appeal for Governments and the public alike. The special session was telling in its illustration of the United Nations inability to grapple with the failure of Governments and its marginalization as a norm-setting institution that is too weak to convert consensus into material and tangible terms.

With official development assistance in decline and the political leverage of transnational business and industry in ascendancy, I wonder whether pressure can be exerted to make a difference at the upcoming session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, at Kyoto. This would seem unlikely, as the United Nations seems relegated to dealing only with the soft issues and not the hard issues of economics. There are clearly lessons to be learned in our approach to determining the results of other global conferences.

The participation of non-governmental organizations at the special session was a milestone event that gave some nourishment to the much-touted and distorted expressions of empowerment and democratization. However, it is one of my disappointments that the wider issue of non-governmental organization participation in the work of the United Nations remains unresolved.

Despite extensive efforts to clarify and move the issue forward in the Sub-Group on Non-Governmental Organizations, the intransigence of a few and the politicization of the subject did not even allow the sub-group to agree on its mandate. While some are concerned about the logistical aspects of dealing with non-governmental organizations — claiming that there are not enough seats or enough meeting time to cater for them — some in fact fear the prospects of greater transparency, accountability and public participation in the intergovernmental decision-making process and use all manner of legal arguments to prevent this from happening.

This approach illustrates that the United Nations is treated ultimately by Governments as a creature of national self-interest where national sovereignty is supreme, however and by whomever that is defined, and not equipped with conditions to reflect universal rights and growing transnational concerns. A mix of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental voices in the United Nations would reflect reality more closely than a nation-State-imposed United Nations and would give it added legitimacy. The proposed peoples' assembly cannot be a substitute for the role of non-governmental organizations in the decision-making process of the United Nations.

Though the Agenda for Peace has been adopted, even if not in full, conflict between countries on what is sovereign and what is not on issues of peace and security continues to rear its head, with both sides claiming legitimacy.

On the subject of the emergency special session, twice this year the General Assembly flexed its muscle in the absence of unanimity among permanent members of the Security Council on the issue of illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories. I would recommend seeking greater recourse in the General Assembly through the resolution "Uniting for peace", to those members that cannot find due justice in the Security Council.

In the final days of the regular session the General Assembly and the presidency responded effectively and played an impartial and constructive role in selecting a Secretary-General when assertive unilateralism provoked deadlock in the Security Council and threatened to undermine the integrity of the institution of the United Nations itself.

A comprehensive package to reform the Security Council remains a tantalizing prospect, but countries first have to comprehend the universal aspirations for change in a United Nations mired in ways of governance that are less than democratic. Security Council reform is delayed not only by the logic of those who do not want to redistribute power, but also by those who would prefer the status quo and fear expansion in both categories. Unanimity on this politically loaded and complicated issue will never be possible. Nor will there be any kind of reform if the Working Group becomes the amphitheater for obstructionist views that speak of principles but exploit the diversity of views and block discussions on the way forward.

I have tried without partisanship — even if a few will not believe me — and with a mixture of caution and innovation, to eke out a mainstream position on the reform of the Security Council and to provide a blueprint of how this is to be done. I have come close. The proposals remain on the table and can be taken up by interested States and brought to final conclusion.

The most disappointing and perhaps the most crucial piece of unfinished business of the fifty-first session is the continuing stalemate over the issue of payment of arrears and of restoring fiscal stability to the Organization. The financial crippling of the United Nations continues to obstruct the momentum for reform, preventing constructive negotiations for genuine reform of the Organization. Arguments about complicated legislative procedures, attaching arbitrary conditions to payments and using the media to cast a different version do not reduce what is simply a solemn treaty obligation. Blind unilateralism will be the undoing of the United Nations.

Dare I hazard any conclusions from all this? What continued to emerge from the fifty-first session were the difficulties of consensus as an instrument upon which the intergovernmental decisions of the United Nations must be built, but which can also be used as a tool to prevent practical and necessary decisions from being taken. Speaking for myself, we have a long way to go if we are to replace our narrow and unhelpful *a la carte* approach to United Nations reforms with a comprehensive one. The Secretary General's reform proposal deserves our full and expeditious attention without becoming a casualty to politics. The task of strengthening the United Nations will depend in large part on the Organization's ability to adapt to change, beyond creeping incremental adjustments. This will not be easy, of course, as we do not yet share a common premise of what constitutes reform. And in this

respect, the diversity of the United Nations is its greatest strength and its greatest weakness.

Every aspect of the United Nations remains a stake and a prize in the escalating debate between the North and the South. Each side has conflicting claims on fundamental values and perspectives, causing political gridlock in many aspects of reform. While it is evident in the governmental and Secretariat contexts that major countries place a high premium on the fact that reform should not in any manner affect their rights, prerogatives and status, developing countries on the other hand lack capacity and are often not united, stressing at times form over substance, even as their negotiating power declines and the coherence of other political groupings strengthens.

The United Nations will not be strengthened if reform only concentrates on cost-effectiveness, efficiency and better coordination. Such objectives alone would divert attention from the United Nations' real functions and Charter responsibilities. If the United Nations is to survive, it has to transform itself from an organization serving only the interests of States to one serving the interests of peoples living in an interdependent and global society.

On my part, I have tried my best, to the best of my ability, to use the potential of my office to revitalize the role of the General Assembly, consistent with its mandates and the United Nations Charter. I have done so with transparency and without bias, many times using the lure of Malaysian meals to draw the ambassadors into discussions in times of progress and deadlock. While efforts to bring the Secretariat and intergovernmental sides of the house together have helped to dispel myths and ease certain tensions, it has also been necessary on occasion to draw distinctions between those roles and responsibilities. Drawing such distinctions has in itself helped to dispense with a ceremonial and protocol-driven Presidency and created a more proactive working office.

I have devoted a lot of effort to interacting with the world outside the United Nations, keeping my door open not only to Government representatives, but to non-governmental organizations, students, the business community, universities and journalists in equal measure. I have also gone to the field to witness suffering and deprivation by visiting refugee camps, even if I could not take up the many invitations from various Governments. Far from being an exercise in winning popularity, this has been a serious attempt to explain multilateralism and the role of the United Nations — its purposes, inner workings, strengths and contradictions — in plain terms, without glitz or rhetoric. Speaking frankly, and I hope wisely, has helped to distinguish form from substance, framing the shape of difficult issues ahead as the roles of Governments, international organizations and non-state actors are being redefined. One of my most memorable events was United Nations Day, when, in stark contrast to the summit of the Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations, we gave children from around the world the chance to speak in their own words of their hopes for the United Nations.

I have tried to strike a balance between vision and practicality, avoiding wooly idealism so as to make things happen through the issues themselves. I had hoped for effervescence and a combined sense of purpose. If only we, as ambassadors, could have gone beyond our basic national positions, allowing multilateralism to take root. At the end of the day the unfinished business and the inertia that accompanies it is because of entrenched national positions and their attendant politics. The United Nations has not yet found a formula to become a universal house which can diffuse the debilitating aspects of power politics, or overcome bilateral and sub-regional hostilities which stand in the way of effectuating the universal values of the Charter. We speak so much about globalism and interdependence but are helpless in the face of our built-in discordance. We must not allow those false prophets who speak of the clash of civilizations to be proven true. The United Nations must relate to the real world. I believe in underlining the importance of the so-called silent majority, who must be heard. Their collective voice can silence even the most powerful.

Finally, my sincere thanks to everyone, especially those who assisted me in many special ways, perhaps without really comprehending the method in my madness, but who nevertheless gave me the benefit of the doubt and found enjoyment nonetheless. For me and my country, Malaysia, it has been a great honour to serve you and the United Nations.

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: We are now coming to the end of the fifty-first regular session of the General Assembly. May I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the fifty-first session

The President: I declare closed the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.